



AP[®] English Language & Composition 2004 Scoring Commentary Form B

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**AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
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Question 1

**Sample: V
Score: 9**

This writer demonstrates an understanding of how a text conveys a position in ways other than by overt statement: “By understating the supposed reasons for pest control yet simultaneously exaggerating the actual intentions, the killing of birds by means of parathion is crafted into a cold-blooded act.” The writer provides ample evidence that he or she understands not only the effect that Carson’s argument makes (“bitterly mocks the farmers,” “stuns her readers,” “pounds the severity of the situation”), but also the means by which Carson makes it happen. Strategies are not simply listed, but are analyzed in terms of Carson’s overall argument. The conclusion is thoughtful and compelling, demonstrating how Carson’s prose ultimately shows “the plight of humanity, apparently sliding down a slippery slope of habitual killing and destruction of the natural world.” This paper, scored a 9, represents an exemplary response to the prompt.

**Sample: F
Score: 8**

With a steady focus and unwavering attention to the prompt, this writer defines Carson’s central argument and effectively analyzes the rhetorical strategies. The student’s own word choices support the position he or she takes—“Carson declares her disgust,” “to emphasize the needless slaughter,” “war and carnage,” etc. The writer connects each strategy with its effect in supporting Carson’s argument—poison becomes evil because Carson’s choice of diction has evil connotations. The writer understands why rhetorical questions are necessary and effective, arguing that “Carson is clearly demanding someone to take responsibility.” Further, the writer sums up well, seeing a greater picture: “Carson emphasizes points, presents truths, and makes demands, which ultimately support her argument against poisonings.” Scored an 8, this paper effectively analyzes Carson’s argument.

**Sample: Q
Score: 7**

This writer competently suggests that Carson argues those who poison the environment “have no right to do so.” Diction is modified here by an apt descriptor, “death-related diction,” and then developed effectively as the writer argues that Carson is “making the poisoning sound less like ‘eradicating’ and more like murder.” The student is thorough in following the “death” connections and makes appropriate parallels, such as referring to the dead birds “as a ‘casualty list,’ making it sound like a wartime slaughter.” The essay is clear and responds to the prompt with the “mature prose style” indicative of the score of 7 on the scoring guide.

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Question 2

**Sample: P
Score: 9**

As this writer develops a position, he or she begins to question the analogy made by the author of the passage: “While his analogy serves well to argue his point, it does not take into account the difference between books and statues: Statues are meant for public display, while books, allowing only one reader to view its pages at a time, are more intimate.” The writer continues, asking an impressive question that was apparent to only a few of his or her peers—if a statue is locked away, “who holds the key” and, even more important, “How do we ensure the key is not thrown away once the statue is locked in the attic?” In making connections with the present day, the writer points to the violation of prisoners’ human rights in the “recent release of photos of prison guards in Iraq.” The writer concludes convincingly by acknowledging that the one-hundred-year-old piece lacks applicable solutions to the complexity of today’s world. This thoughtful paper received a score of 9.

**Sample: A
Score: 8**

In prose that engages the reader, this writer identifies immediately the “complexity of the issue at hand” and the “clashing of viewpoints.” There is a balance of language and a deftness at comparing the “large boned full figured women” of the past to today’s “tiny framed runway models.” Further, this writer understands that perceptions change over time and that the “fuller figures” may return to replace the “skeletal size 2 figures.” The writer effectively maintains a focus on his or her choice to develop the perceptions of change through time, even though the last sentence appears to be inverted in its meaning. The paper, an effective response to the prompt, was scored an 8.

**Sample: J
Score: 5**

Responding to one part of the passage, the writer of this 5 paper analyzes the author’s argument and evaluates its validity for our time in terms of censorship. The writer accepts the passage at its face value, ignoring any potential for complexity. Making a comparison between the library books on high shelves and today’s “magazines and books on pornography,” this writer argues that he or she does not have to “look up that high if [he or she chooses] not to.” Because the development of the response is insufficient, this paper received a score of 5.

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Question 3

**Sample: B
Score: 9**

In order to explore the connection between unspoken rules and belonging, this writer turns to literature to seed his or her impressive examination of the topic. Complicating the quote, the writer argues that “while unspoken rules may facilitate acceptance into society and increase one’s chances of belonging . . . nobody ever completely feels that they fit in.” Not only are the literary choices wide ranging and impressive—*Jane Eyre*, *Hamlet*, *Grendel*, and *The Joy Luck Club*—but each is addressed in turn in such a way as to demonstrate a successful understanding of how the text might serve well the prompt. The writer understands that while there is certainly a connection between unspoken rules and belonging, there is something more that is necessary to give more than just an appearance of belonging. This full response earned a score of 9.

**Sample: P
Score: 8**

This writer uses a string of examples to demonstrate the connection between unspoken rules and belonging as “a weird sense of intrinsic understanding.” The range of examples is wide; by using different cultures to illustrate varying responses, the writer crafts an effective analysis of the connection between belonging and unspoken rules. By the time the writer gets to the mother who offers to pay for a too-expensive trinket for her daughter’s friend, we understand the writer’s point, and are willing to acknowledge the “healthy embarrassment that puts a connecting string between friends and a wall between daughter and mother.” This paper, which received an 8, is a thoroughly effective response to the prompt.

**Sample: H
Score: 6**

This writer adequately analyzes the connection between unspoken rules and belonging. As the paper progresses, the writer appears to be making sense of his or her own understanding of the prompt and its meaning. As the writer continues to develop ideas about how women dress in India, how people are “unconsciously aware of the unspoken rules,” how society itself is like a high school with “multiple layers or levels to get to a state of belonging,” the student moves more deeply toward understanding the meaning of the word “tacit,” which is used in the quotation. The student returns to India near the conclusion of the paper and attempts to bring all the points together in the final sentences. This paper, finally, is an adequate response to the topic and therefore was scored a 6.